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### Sic Transit Gloria Mundheim

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## *SIC TRANSIT GLORIA MUNDHEIM\**

STEPHEN B. BURBANK†

It was my good fortune to serve as Bob Mundheim's Associate Dean for three years. Coming early in his deanship, these were challenging, exciting, and difficult years. The school was a seesaw in equipoise, and it was apparent that the leadership of the Dean would determine on which side it rested when the balance gave way. As informed observers recognize, we ended the period of Bob's leadership very much on the upside. Even informed observers may not know, however, the forces that had to be overcome to get there.

Of course, the major obstacle to the school's renaissance—and Bob's main preoccupation as Dean—was the state of its finances and the limitations that decades of underfunding imposed on the possibilities for renewed excellence. Indeed, notwithstanding the progress made by Bob's predecessors, so serious were those limitations that, in some quarters at least, inertia was the dominant force. Collectively, the Law School seemed to have its ambition very well under control.

Biddle Library, once a jewel in our crown, had become a distinct embarrassment, with that part of its annual budget available for new purchases hardly enough to purchase a new car. The faculty, too small in any event, faced the daunting prospect of attempting to replace some of its most distinguished members who were retiring, as well as to keep others who were being pursued by the competition—all in an environment that made us less than competitive in compensation and research support. The facilities in general were inadequate both in the space they afforded and in the technological support they provided for legal education in the late twentieth century. In short, we were living in and on the past.

In this light, Bob's accomplishments are extraordinary. Through his efforts, the school faces not towards the past but towards the future. And it is a bright future indeed. The total budget of Biddle Library has almost tripled, and its capacity to serve the needs of future generations of students, scholars, and practition-

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† Professor of Law, University of Pennsylvania Law School. My apologies to Bill Morris for appropriating as my title his quip after Bob appeared, for approximately two seconds, in television news coverage of the Iran hostage crisis.

ers seems assured. With an endowment increased more than six-fold, compensation and research support for faculty have become competitive, and we are at last growing rather than shrinking. More important, we are no longer bottom heavy, as a number of distinguished senior faculty have recognized Penn's promise, and we have become raider rather than target (aided by twice the number of endowed chairs existing when Bob took office). In the last year of Bob's deanship, the faculty made five offers to positions in the Standing Faculty, and all five were accepted. What a change in seven years!

Our facilities remain inadequate, but, thanks to Bob's foresight, much of the money needed for a new building was in hand or pledged, and the plans for the building and renovation projects he initiated were in place, when he left office. These steps surely helped us to secure Bob's distinguished successor, as they will enable us to address our most serious remaining deficiencies.

Bob's influence on this institution was by no means confined to its finances, although that alone should suffice to earn our undying gratitude. Nor was his influence confined to this institution. In a world of constrained resources, and in the law school world of today, the opportunities for decanal leadership are not what they used to be. Law faculties are jealous of their prerogatives as to faculty appointments and curriculum, and for some members of some faculties leadership is a synonym for hierarchy and hierarchy is bad. It is, therefore, no small feat that Bob Mundheim mobilized this faculty to take seriously education in, and the study of, the ethical norms of the profession and the study of the profession more generally. Nor should it go unremarked that, without Bob's vigorous support, it is unlikely that the Law School's unique public service requirement would have been approved by a faculty ever jealous of temptations that divert attention from the classroom. Both of these educational initiatives help to define distinctive qualities of this Law School; both bring it great credit, and both are already serving as models in the worlds of education and practice. Distinctive too is the Law School's Institute for Law and Economics, which was revived under Bob's watchful eye, and which has demonstrated that neither models nor equations (nor Chicago) exhaust the universe in which such interdisciplinary work can usefully be plied.

In short, Bob Mundheim presided over the rebuilding of an institution. Without his energy, persistence, and attention to detail, there would be far less to celebrate today at the University of Pennsylvania Law School. My fondest hope is that, after a year of per-

sonal and professional refreshment, he will return to enjoy the glory that he was so instrumental in creating. For Bob was not only a great Dean; he is a leader in fields of academic and professional inquiry central to education at this or any other law school. More important, he is a good friend.

